

## ABSTRACT OF THE INVENTION

5 A improved connection shaping technique is disclosed, whereby at least one  
high-priority “preemptive” service flow is initiated at a customer entity in order to limit  
or restrict the effective usable bandwidth on a particular line or connection. According  
to at least one embodiment, a preempt data parcel corresponds to a data parcel which  
includes non-meaningful data. When the preempt cells are received at the ingress port  
of the communication line, the preempt cells may be identified as non-meaningful data  
10 parcels, and may be discarded in accordance with conventional protocols.

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